

LOVE AND DISCRETION.

Had the Tempering of the One with the Other Affected Matrimony?

It cannot be doubted that the popularity of matrimony has materially declined in recent years, and that a kind of general hesitancy seems to prevail respecting the negotiation of such alliances. There was a time when the young people of the country hastened to pair themselves with birdlike eagerness and delight as soon as they were out of school, and society not only encouraged them, but practically commanded them to take that course. They were considered superstitious and burdensome until they got married. The true work of life could not begin with them, they were taught, so long as they remained single. It was their duty to become yoked without unnecessary delay, and it was a disgrace to miss reasonable opportunities in that relation. But it is decidedly different at the present day. The practice of wedlock is no longer imperative, nor does discredit attend the unmarried state, even when prolonged into the thirties. There is as much advice given against marriage as in favor of it by the wise and experienced of both sexes, and the result is a steady decrease in the proportion of actual weddings to possible ones.

The causes which have produced this marked change are not sufficiently definite for satisfactory analysis. It is probably true that our extravagant style of living as compared with that of former times is one of the effective influences. The cost of supporting a wife and raising a family is much larger than it used to be, and this feature of the matter often gives pause on both sides. We have come to measure so many other things by money that matrimony has not escaped the rule. The young people are disinclined to start in a humble way and gradually improve their situation. They want all that their parents have without waiting and striving for it. Many proposals are unquestionably delayed or rejected on this account.

Then it is well known that the new avenues of employment open to women have made them more independent, and probably also more exacting as to the qualifications of husbands. It is not nearly so common as it once was for girls to marry simply in order to secure a home and a living; they are able now to earn good wages and to take their time about assuming the duties of wives and mothers. We may safely believe, moreover, that the progress of women in education and in social power has led them to look less favorably upon the connubial condition by subordinating their hearts to their heads, so to speak. And finally it cannot but be that the abundance of criticism to which the marriage system has been subjected by writers of pronounced vigor and skill has served to weaken it in the popular estimation, and to disparage the quality of sacredness that is its highest claim to respect and honor.

There is no reason as yet, however, to lament the prevailing tendency as a national misfortune. The amount of marrying is still large enough for all ordinary purposes, and it may be that less rather than more of it would best promote the interests of society. Such unions should be formed with some other object than that of merely propagating the species. They involve the most serious obligations and responsibilities of human life, and if people are learning to be slow and careful about making contracts of so much importance it is hardly a sign of decay or a threat of calamity.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

A Quaint Old Austrian Custom.

The quaint old Austrian custom of a bride being cast off, as it were, by her countrymen when she takes to herself a foreign husband, was an interesting feature at the recent marriage of the Archduchess Louise of Tuscany. The archduchess entered the church followed by a long train of royal and noble Austrian ladies. They stood in a semicircle around her until the moment the bridegroom placed the ring upon her finger; then they turned and left her, for she was no longer a countrywoman of theirs. For a moment the princess stood alone—unattended; then a number of Saxon ladies ranged themselves behind her—she had become a Saxon.

At the marriage of Marie Antoinette, this custom, which in her case was observed only on the French frontier, had a pathetic denouement. When the Austrian ladies attempted to leave the new Dauphiness of France she refused to be left, and as if foreseeing what her fate would be in her adopted country clung to them and entreated them to take her back to Austria again. Actual force had to be used to separate her from her attendants.—Paris Letter.

Many Questions but for Mirrors.

It is doubtful whether men would gain as much time as women would by the loss of mirrors. Aside from the fact that they don't have the chance to spend so much time at their looking glasses as women do (if they did you may be sure they would), it is likely that a man would have to stand as a kind of substitute for the mirror in his wife's toilet. Most men, therefore, would be able to go down to the grave with the proud consciousness that they had answered the question, "Is my hat on straight?" 100,000,000 times in the course of a long and happy life instead of only 5,000,000 times, as they probably do now.—New York World.

A Rare Old Globe.

One of the most significant curios in New York is a copper globe in the Lenox library. It is only 4½ inches in diameter, but it is believed to be the earliest globe to lay down the new discoveries by Columbus. It dates back to the first decade of the sixteenth century. The little it shows of this hemisphere is mostly wrong, and the few names would be recognized only by experts in matters geographical, but the globe is rightly esteemed one of the chief treasures of a rare collection.—New York Sun.

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